

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Consent Item:

New District Facility Plans: Boyle, Hardin, Ohio, Owen, Spencer and Webster County School Districts and Fort Thomas Independent School District

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 157.420 (4), KRS 157.622, KRS 157.620, 702 KAR 4:180

Action Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) approve the proposed District Facility Plans (DFP) for the above listed Kentucky school districts?

History/Background:

Existing Policy for New DFPs. In accordance with 702 KAR 4:180, each district must develop a local DFP at the completion of a four-year cycle or at the completion of an eight-year cycle (maximum) if the district applies for and is granted a waiver. This process provides a District Facility Plan that contains an assessment of the school district's attributes and operations including the district profile, demographic information, facility conditions, and finances (cost of delivery of services). Local school districts are required to select a Local Planning Committee (LPC) to develop a District Facility Plan (DFP) outlining capital construction priorities.

Information reviewed in developing the DFP provides the LPC with a comprehensive view of program and facility needs required to provide an equitable educational opportunity. KDE staff presents the process to be undertaken by the district in an orientation session. Information for review is then developed by the LPC and its consultants.

The LPC, by virtue of its makeup, encourages both community involvement and diversity of ideas. The LPC recommends a DFP to the local board. If the local board does not approve the DFP, it goes back to the LPC for further refinement. However, the DFP submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is the final decision of the local board of education and may or may not reflect the determinations of the LPC.

For each district indicated above, with the exception of Ohio County, the submitted DFP was recommended by the LPC and approved by the local board of education. In their June meeting, the State Board rejected the Ohio County District Facilities Plan and requested that the Local Board meet in mediation with the Local Planning Committee to resolve the two main issues, (1) district organization and (2) the status of Horse Branch Elementary. KDE hired a mediator along with facilitation services provided by the Kentucky School Boards Association. Following the mediation, the groups agreed to keep Horse Branch as a "transitional" facility, but could not agree to change the current district organization. The DFP submitted has been approved by the Local Board, but not the Local Planning Committee.

KDE staff certifies that the plans presented are in accordance with 702 KAR 4:180 and are in compliance with the appropriate steps as follows: (1) LPC selection process documented; (2) review of proposed district facility plan for educational programs and curriculum, demographics, facility evaluations, adequacy of financial plan, and adequacy of square footage; (3) public forum notification through news media; (4) local public hearing conducted with an appointed hearing officer; and (5) plan submitted for KBE approval.

Staff Recommendation(s) and Rationale:

Staff recommends that the KBE approve the proposed new District Facility Plans for Boyle, Hardin, Ohio, Owen, Spencer and Webster County School Districts and Fort Thomas Independent School District. The plans are in compliance with statute and regulations.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency

In Standard 4 of the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement it is noted that the school's physical environment has an impact on student achievement. Research also indicates that better facilities enhance equity (equal opportunities for all students), attitudes and retention of staff, and parental involvement.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses

Public forums and a local public hearing were held in the school districts. The plans were approved by the required bodies by majority vote.

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Commissioner of Education

Date:

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